

THE GULL



GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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FOUNDED 1917

GGAS Celebrates Earth Day

by Marjorie Blackwell

CALIFORNIA
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES


MAY 31 2002

LIBRARY

Over 100 volunteers celebrated Earth Day 2002 with two wetland restoration and clean-up events in San Francisco and Oakland which were sponsored by GGAS.

More than 60 volunteers helped clean up and restore a four-acre marsh between Piers 92 and 94 on San Francisco's southern waterfront. The energetic workers removed more than 300 tires, a debris box full of invasive, exotic vegetation (destined for compost) and many pounds of recyclable scrap metal. The event, co-sponsored by the Port of San Francisco and Sunset Scavenger Company, marked the kick-off of a project sponsored by the Port and GGAS to enhance and expand the Pier 94 wetlands. The Port plans to remove construction debris, improve tidal circulation and expand the wetland area and public access. GGAS will sponsor ongoing and regular clean-ups of the wetlands area. For more information, call the GGAS office at 510.843.2222.

In the Oakland Estuary, just south of Jack London Square, over 50 people, including many GGAS members, celebrated Earth Day by launching a wetland enhancement project that will restore some of the last remaining natural habitat in the estuary. The Clinton Basin wetland project—a collaborative effort of the GGAS, San Francisco BayKeeper, the 5th Avenue Neighbors and the Port of Oakland—will revive a natural wetland area that has

been filled and degraded by industrial use for years. The Port will clean up debris in the area, grade the surface and create an island by excavating a 60-foot wide channel that will increase tidal flow and provide a safe habitat for roosting shore- and water-birds. After the groundbreaking celebration, everyone went to work collecting bags of debris and garbage from the shoreline. 



Anne McTavish



Jacqui Smalley

New e-mail address for articles and feedback

All articles, feedback and questions about the Gull should be submitted to our new Gull editor, Eva Guralnick, at eva@egcommunications.com.

On Earth Day, volunteers clean up and restore a marsh between Piers 92 and 94 in San Francisco (top), while another group works at the Clinton Basin wetland project, just south of Jack London Square, Oakland (above).



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OTHER

Observations

Jay Withgott

415.452.6763 withgott@pacbell.net

GGAS Webmaster

Tomas Latham

Northern California Bird Box

415.681.7422 tlatham@davidbowie.com

EDITOR

Eva Guralnick

415.387.8731 eva@egcommunications.com

CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Arthur Feinstein 510.843.6551

Dana Kokubun 510.843.9912

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Golden Gate Audubon Society
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
Berkeley, CA 94702

Phone: 510.843.2222 • Fax: 510.843.5351
www.goldengateaudubon.org
ggas@compuserve.com

Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday 9-12, 1-4 (please call first)

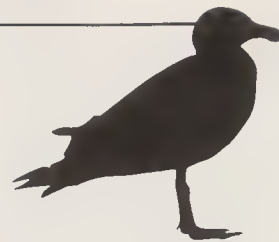
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FIELD TRIPS

Susan Groves



Strybing Arboretum, San Francisco

Sunday June 2, July 7, August 4,
September 1

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this half-day trip. GGAS Co-Leaders: Allan Ridley, Heather Chase, Rick Ferrick; Strybing Arboretum Docents: Helen McKenna, Linday Lyons. For more information, call 415.566.3241.

Lassen Volcanic Park

Friday - Sunday, June 28-30

Join the Murphy family on the annual

GGAS family camping excursion to Lassen. A full description is available in the May issue of the *Gull*. Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy. For more information, call 415.564.0074.

Backpacking Trip in Lassen Volcanic National Park

Friday-Monday, August 23-26

Backpack in three miles for three nights of primitive camping. To avoid impact on fragile habitat, this trip is limited to 12 people. Leaders: David Rice and Robin Pulich. For details, contact David Rice at 510.527.7210 or drice@jps.net.

Bird East Africa Next January

Our November birding and wildlife safari to Kenya and Tanzania has a waiting list, so we have scheduled another for early in 2003, departing from San Francisco on January 18th. Join GGAS past president Steve Margolin for a two-week trip to Mt. Kenya, Samburu, the Rift Valley lakes and the Maasai Mara. We will see ostriches, turacos, hornbills, rollers, waxbills, widowbirds and whydahs. And we will take plenty of time to look at lions, hippos, zebras, rhinos, gazelles and wildebeests. The cost, including airfare, will be \$4,495 per person. A one-week extension (\$2,695 per person) will take us to Amboseli, then over the border into Tanzania to visit the Serengeti, Oldupai Gorge and Ngorongoro Crater. For more information or a detailed itinerary, call Steve Margolin at 530.342.6476. Join us, and soon it's bustards out all over.



Hands-on Education Wins Young Minds

By Marjorie Blackwell

Do you know what a wetland is?" GGAS staffer Tsahai Codner asks an intent Alameda fourth-grade class. "It's when we have water and land," she says, as she shows an overhead slide.

"There are all types of wetlands—ponds and lakes, and this," she says, pointing to a slide, "is called a marsh, a tidal salt marsh. Do you know what a tide is? A tide is when water moves in on the land and back out. It happens twice a day when the water flows in from the ocean, into the bay and onto the land. So, there is ocean, bay, land, high tide, and when the water goes back, it's . . . what?"

"Low tide," murmurs the class.

"I can't hear you," she says. "Tell me what happens twice a day."

"OCEAN, BAY, LAND, HIGH TIDE," shouts a chorus of eager voices.

"All right!" says Codner with a wide grin. Next, showing a slide of a California Clapper Rail, she asks the students if they know what endangered means. Hands go up. "It means dangerous," comes a reply. "It might hurt you," says another.

"No," says Codner. "It means some animals are near extinction, and when the last one is gone, you won't see any more. The Clapper Rail lives in marsh wetlands, but 90 percent of our wetlands are gone. Did you know that? That's why we're trying to restore

marshes, like the one at Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park."

Codner coordinates and conducts the school-based component of the GGAS education program that serves over 2,000 elementary students in Alameda and East Oakland each year. Her enthusiasm, her rapport with kids, and her interactive style of explaining the complex web of environ-



Tsahai and students netting plankton.

ment, habitat and pollution capture the students' attention. The slide show is followed by classroom games, where, for example, the students learn about flight patterns of various birds by trying out their wings. Codner concludes on a triumphant note when she tells the class that on their upcoming field trip, they will get to "dig in the mud." Wow!

For Codner, 26, serving as the GGAS environmental education coordinator is the perfect job. A graduate

of Howard University, with a major in biology, she has been interested in the environment ever since she went on her first field trip to a mangrove swamp as a sixth grader in Miami, Florida. "That trip had a profound effect on me," she says. "It was so much fun to learn about ecosystems. I wanted to give others the same opportunity. The kids get so excited—it's a way of channeling their energy."

In addition to making class presentations and leading field trips, Codner recruits elementary school teachers to participate in the program, schedules classroom visits and field trips, coordinates GGAS volunteers to help her, and recruits, trains and supervises more than 50 students from Oakland's Castlemont High School and Alameda's Encinal High School to serve as mentors in the program.

Codner began her environmental career by joining Americorps when she graduated from college in 1999. She was assigned to San Francisco's Presidio, where she worked as the aquatics specialist for the Crissy Field wetlands restoration project.

She joined the GGAS staff in 2000, and, not surprising to her colleagues, one year later received an ACE (Audubon Cares about Excellence) Award from the National Audubon Society for her outstanding job performance. Way to go, Tsahai! 🐦

The New and Future Gull and A Big Thank You to Peter Caldwell

By Arthur Feinstein

Many of you have expressed your concern over the late arrival of several of our Gull issues. After much thought we have concluded that the Gull will always have problems with its timing as long as it is published entirely as a volunteer effort. It is increasingly difficult to find a volunteer who has the time and necessary computer skills to devote to the Gull so that it gets to the printer as quickly as possible.

Peter Caldwell, our last Gull editor, has done a truly wonderful job for the last three years, but he has a new job that takes more of his time. Getting out the Gull 11 times per year is no small task. It takes a lot of time and effort. Peter gave that to us gladly and we truly appreciate his enormous gift of time, interest and passion. We also greatly appreciate the tremendous amount of work that Peter has put into the Golden Gate Audubon Society, not only in editing the Gull but also as a Board Member.

To remedy the Gull situation and to ensure a continuity of on-time delivery, we have decided to have the Gull published by a professional firm. After a very difficult winnowing process (we received over 60 applications for the position) we have hired Eva Guralnick of e.g. communications to be our editor and designer. She comes to us with great and enthusiastic references and a knockout portfolio.

To afford this new process we are reducing the number of Gulls we send

out each year by one issue by combining our June/July/August issues. For the rest of the year the Gull will remain a monthly newsletter. We were already producing a combined July/August issue, and our summer months are the slowest for our organization, with the fewest field trips and no general programs. We will now list all of our summer field trips in the June/July/August Gull, and you can always re-

fresh your memory by going to our Web page at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

We expect that this new process will result in a Gull that arrives in your mailbox in a timely manner and that is, as Eva uses her graphics skills, ever more attractive.

And we send our sincere thanks to Peter Caldwell for the wonderful work he has done for all of us for three years. Thank you, Peter! 🐦

Staff Member Wins National Audubon Photo Award

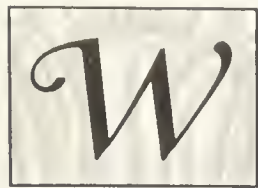
We're pleased to announce that Patti Garcia, GGAS Administrative Assistant and Community Coordinator, is one of the winners of the 2002 Audubon Magazine Photo Contest for staff. Her photo, shown at right, took first prize in the category "Connecting People with Nature." The photo shows teacher Richard Navie from Markham Elementary participating in a training session at the Martin Luther King, Jr. shoreline in Oakland as part of a restoration exercise in February 2002.



Patti Garcia

A Change for the Better

By Arthur Feinstein



We are very pleased to announce the appointment of Dana Kokubun as our Co-Executive Director. She joins Arthur Feinstein and the GGAS Board of Directors in helping to move GGAS to new levels of achievement.

Dana has been our Program Director for the last few years, but this seriously undervalued her talents. Dana first honed her environmental skills working for the Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter in the 1980s. In fact, she worked with Arthur Feinstein as GGAS struggled successfully to preserve wetlands on the Oakland Airport. Dana then moved to Hawaii and became the Executive Director of National Audubon Society's Hawaiian office for three years. Dana then spent some time concentrating on being a mother, but the environment is in her blood and she worked as a lead volunteer in establishing one of Hawaii's most prestigious nature interpretive centers. When Arthur heard Dana was thinking of returning to the San Francisco Bay Area he immediately asked if she would consider working for GGAS. Dana, to our great joy, replied in the affirmative.

Why do we need a Co-Executive Director? Over the last four years, GGAS has undergone some significant changes. We helped create the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge and with that success came the understanding that creating the Refuge was not enough. Our natural world faces many challenges if it is to survive, and one of the

greatest is educating an increasingly urban population about the wonders and importance of our natural world. Too many of us seem to believe that the human race can survive without regard for what happens to our environment.

The creation of the Refuge seemingly gave us a great opportunity to begin reaching out to our community with environmental educational programs that could bring our neighbors the message that the creatures with whom we share our world also deserve a home.

We began to develop an education program starting four years ago with volunteers and then slowly adding more staff. We now have three staff in our Oakland/Alameda educational program and have developed one of the most innovative and successful environmental education programs in the Bay Area.

But the Refuge site itself was not favorable to a large educational program because part of it is a Superfund site and the final transfer of the Refuge from the Navy to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is delayed until the contaminant issue is resolved. And so our educational program began to use the 72-acre restored wetland located at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park in San Leandro Bay. This wetland was created as a result of our successful decade-long litigation with the Port of Oakland. Now we teach over 2,000 children a year in both Alameda and Oakland about the values and wonders of nature.

Such growth in programs does not come easily. It takes a lot of money to pay the salaries of three education staff. And of course we must continue our conservation efforts. For example, our goal of restoring health to our nearly extirpated California quail population in San Francisco is a major effort, and to succeed the program really needs a staff person. And we have already spent many tens of thousands of dollars in our desperate struggle to preserve the invaluable 1,000-acre Gateway Valley in Orinda, one of the only sites in the East Bay identified by the U.S. EPA as an "Aquatic Site of National Importance."

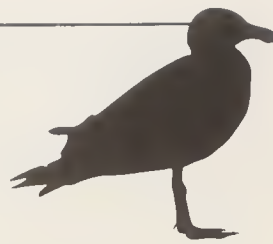
Whew! What a lot to do. And we're doing it! But it takes time and effort. Our wonderful volunteers do an incredible amount of work, but some projects—such as our education programs—need the consistency that only staff can provide. The addition of Dana to our executive team and her increased responsibility and workload give us a lot more confidence in our ability to achieve all of the ambitious goals we have set for ourselves. 🐦

Call for Photos

We need you! The Gull would like to build a collection of photographs donated by members which we can use to illustrate future issues. If you are interested in contributing photos, please email Gull editor Eva Guralnick at eva@egcommunications.com for submission guidelines and image needs.

BOOK REVIEW

Arthur Feinstein



Restoring North America's Birds

by Robert A. Askins,
Yale University Press

If you are interested in the fate of our wild bird species, then *Restoring North America's Birds* is for you. A truly fascinating new work by Robert A. Askins, Professor of Zoology at Connecticut College, the book addresses the issue of bird population declines and how we can work to reverse them.

Professor Askins looks at seven habitat types across our nation, providing an analysis of why specific bird species are facing population declines in those habitats and suggesting ways, often new and innovative, to manage these habitats in order to preserve the bird populations. The new science of landscape ecology provides the tools for his analysis and solutions. The seven habitats are East Coast grasslands and thickets, the Great Plains, eastern forests, boreal forests, western mountain slopes, southwest floodplains, and the longleaf pine woodlands.

This book is easily accessible for the lay person and some of the informa-

tion is marvelously fascinating. Professor Askins' analysis of why the Passenger Pigeon disappeared from the earth is worth the read alone. A paperback edition of this book is now available and we urge all of you concerned about bird conservation to read it.

Professor Askins begins by describing how scientists have determined from historical writings and other means the ecology of our ancient Eastern grassland habitats. Following the last ice age, a large grassland savannah occupied the east coast and grassland birds proliferated. As the eastern forests developed and overwhelmed the savannah, patches of open space were always present due to forest fires, severe storms such as hurricanes, and intentional forest fires started by Native Americans as they became inhabitants of the land. These patches of open grassland sustained the original savannah grassland bird species, although in fewer numbers.

Today, however, these grasslands have become rare indeed. The east coast, while heavily urbanized, also has large tracts of forested lands. But, because we now stop forest fires, open grassland acreage has been significantly reduced and grassland birds are suffering. As a result, 15 of the 19 eastern grassland/savannah bird species are witnessing serious population declines.

Furthermore, these birds use a whole series of habitats. Some birds specialize and use open grasslands that appear shortly after a fire, while oth-

ers prefer the shrubby habitat that forms a few years after a fire. Yet other bird species prefer to live in areas that are dominated by thin stands of saplings as forests just start to return, or prefer the habitat that beavers produce when they flood a forested area.

The conclusion: a natural ecosystem has many habitats, and bird species diversify to make use of those habitats. As we reduce habitats to monocultures (e.g. tree plantations of only one type of tree) or simply reduce the variety of habitats (e.g. through curtailing forest fires), the specialized bird species will suffer declines, as will all other species adapted to those specific habitat types.

How can we compensate for this loss of habitat diversity? Professor Askins has suggestions for all of the habitat types he discusses, such as the clearing of utility pole corridors in Eastern grasslands. For example, if an electric power line goes through a forest, perhaps the entire area around the power line and its towers could be cleared and kept open as shrub and grassland. This helps in tower maintenance and provides patches of grassland and shrubs necessary for some bird species.

In a very controversial proposal, Professor Askins suggests that clearcutting some parts of Eastern forests may be very beneficial for the same reason. On the other hand, he does not suggest that clearcutting is necessarily good for western forests and specifically shows how clearcutting may significantly impact some western bird species.

One of the greatest revelations of the book, and of landscape ecology, is that even relatively large nature preserves may lose many of their distinctive bird species if the surrounding landscape is completely transformed. "Even large areas must be part of a regional and ultimately continental sys-

A bequest to the Golden Gate Audubon Society helps make it possible for us to continue the good work we do in helping preserve our natural world for future generations. If you are interested in setting up a bequest, we have a team of experts who will be glad to help you. Please call Arthur Feinstein at our GGAS office for more information at 510.843.6551.

tem of preserves to support nomadic and migratory species," he writes. "Learning the breeding, stopover and winter habitats of these species is crucial to their survival."

One of the book's major themes is that with proper management of our existing natural resource use, be it forestry, grazing, power line corridors, etc., we may be able to provide a reasonable semblance of historic habitat types of sufficient size to sustain threatened bird species. I personally doubt that this will prove possible for all of our resource uses, but I am convinced by Professor Askins that enlightened resource management may indeed prove a solution to some very difficult problems. The question is whether resource managers will be willing to implement such novel management regimes.

While Professor Askins addresses only seven habitat types and leaves out many we wish he had discussed—for example, our west coast wetlands—he clearly hopes that the lessons we learn from his examples will enable us to develop similar solutions for these other habitat types and thus for the bird species dependent upon them.

This may be the face of future conservation. I urge you to read it. 🐦



Anne McFavish



Anne McFavish

Volunteers at the Earth Day wetland restoration and clean-up event between Piers 92 and 94 in San Francisco, from story on page one.

Donations

Golden Eagle (\$1000 or more)

Marjorie Smith

(Stow Lake Education Project)

Peregrine Falcon (\$500 or more)

Anne and Boyard Rowe (shares)

Jacqui Smalley and John Austin

(in-kind)

Least Tern (\$200 or more)

Frank and Janice Delfino (FAWR)

Clapper Rail (\$100 or more)

John A. Sproul (Save the Quail)

Gifts (to \$99)

Heather Borman

Patricia Donato (Save the Quail)

Judith Dunham (Gateway Valley)

Lisa Hayes

Dr. Richard and Theresa Horrigan

John Luther

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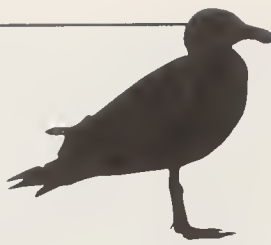
John V. Sudall

Ellen Yamamoto

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to the Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in the Gull, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

OBSERVATIONS

April 1-30, 2002
Jay Withgott



The migration that began with so many early records in March slowed just a bit but continued on a markedly early track in April, with many species showing up before their usual arrival dates.

Cassin's Vireos, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Nashville and Black-throated Gray Warblers established their presence regionwide in the opening week of the month, followed by Western Tanagers and Hammond's, Olive-sided, and Ash-throated Flycatchers by mid-month. Swainson's Thrushes, Dusky Flycatchers, Western Wood-Pewees, and MacGillivray's Warblers trickled in throughout the period, while Blue Grosbeaks, Yellow-breasted Chats, and Black Terns appeared near month's end.

Along our coasts, the annual northward procession of Pacific Loons was chronicled by several seawatchers, who also tallied impressive numbers of other migrant species of sea and shore. Several tantalizing mega-rarities were reported, but unfortunately the reports lacked details or the birds were seen only by single observers.

Loons to Ducks

Morning seawatches during favorable winds at Pigeon Pt and Bolsa Pt, SM, documented some stunning flights of migrating loons. High count for Pacific Loons was 85,306 in 5 hr 15 min on Apr. 17 at Bolsa Pt (RSTh), while counts of 5,000-20,000 were recorded on 4 other mornings between the 13th and 27th (JD, JL, RSTh). The maximum

for Red-throated Loons was 684 on Apr. 13 from Bolsa Pt (RSTh), and that for Common Loons was about 2,000 in 2 hr Apr. 20 from Pigeon Pt (JL). Meanwhile, a few loons showed up at inland locations: 3 Pacific and 5 Common at L. Tahoe, PLA, Apr. 21 (WR); 6 Common at Boca Res, NEV, Apr. 25 (SH); and a first county record Red-throated at Camp Far West Res, YUB, Apr. 23 (TM). Red-necked Grebes were reported from Cleone, MEN, Apr. 2 (2; DT) and Davenport, SCZ, Apr. 15 (MB, DVP).

Black-footed Albatrosses were spotted from shore from Pacific Grove, MTY, Apr. 14 (9; DR); Natural Bridges SP, SCZ, Apr. 18 (3; KA); and Pigeon Pt, SM, Apr. 18 (8; JD); while 25 were seen Apr. 21 on a PT off Fairhaven, HUM (MW, mob). A report was received (and details provided) from a fisheries observer of a Short-tailed Albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*) seen Mar. 25 at a location 18.4 miles off the Eel R. mouth, HUM (TP). This species has become a focus of concern recently as individuals are often killed by longline fishing techniques.

Northern Fulmar numbered 150 on the Apr. 21 PT out of Fairhaven, HUM (MW, mob), which also tallied 30 Pink-footed Shearwaters and 20 Sooties. Nine Pink-footed were reported from land on 5 occasions, and Sooties were reported frequently from land, with a high count of at least 7,000 passing by in 1.5 hr, on Apr. 26 off NBSP, SCZ (KA). On Apr. 13 a Black-vented Shearwater appeared off the coast of Montara, SM (AJ).

A Least Bittern called at the Valensin Ranch, SAC, Apr. 10 (AEn), while an

impressive 16 American Bitterns were tallied Apr. 23 at Yolo Bypass WA, YOL (SH). A total of 8 Cattle Egrets showed up Apr. 10-20 in SCL (MR; mob), Apr. 25 in GLE (BD, SG, BW, EP), Apr. 29 in KIN (JR), and Apr. 30 in YOL (EP, JRa, CH).

Bodega Bay's Emperor Goose (*Chen canagica*) remained through at least the 21st (CN, FO, MP). While geese largely left their Central Valley winter haunts, a few stragglers lingered on in coastal locations through the month—single Greater White-fronteds in HUM, SCZ, and SF; Snows in ALA, MTY, and YOL; and Ross's in ALA and HUM. Brant migrating offshore produced peak counts of 6,000 on Apr. 17 and 5,300 on Apr. 27 from Bolsa Pt, SM (RSTh). A late Tundra Swan was at Mad R. Slough, HUM, Apr. 18 (GB, JH).

The **Falcated Duck** (*Anas falcata*) found in March at Honey L. WA, LAS, continued until Apr. 2, then was not seen again until a final sighting on the 8th (CP). Eurasian Wigeon had mostly departed, with only a few April reports through the 21st, including 5 still at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, Apr. 6 (CN). The Tufted Duck at Westlake Pond, SCZ, left between the 3rd and 5th (DVP), but another was found at L. Merritt, ALA, on the 25th (CK). Pairs of Harlequin Ducks were noted Apr. 1 at the Virgin Cr. mouth, MEN (V), Apr. 8 at Chimney Rock, PRNS (FS), and continuing in Monterey Harbor, MTY, Apr. 13 (JSp), while several also remained in HUM. On Apr. 2 a Long-tailed Duck was found in Cleone, MEN (DT). And a female Barrow's Goldeneye lingered in the Mineral sewage ponds, TEH, Apr. 6 (JS, BWd).

Raptors to Alcids

A late adult Bald Eagle flew north over Hwy 92, SM, Apr. 14 (PN). The next day, an adult Broad-winged Hawk—a rare sighting for California in spring—

flew above Skyline Open Space Preserve, from SM airspace into that of SCL (RSTh). Swainson's Hawks were found nesting in ALA Apr. 14 for an uncommon county breeding occurrence (SG). The latest Rough-legged Hawk report was from Howard Ranch, SAC, Apr. 10 (AEn). On Apr. 20 a Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*) was reported from Salmon Cr. n. of Bodega Bay, SON (MP), but no details were provided and no further sightings were made.

At the Greater Sage Grouse lek at Crowley L., MON, Apr. 20, observers counted a whopping total of 135 displaying males and perhaps 20 females (BP, KP).

On Apr. 21, a Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) was reported from a roadside ditch along Hwy 29, NAP. Observers said they got a 3-second look; no further details were provided (RR, MS). An even more astounding claim occurred on Apr. 16, with a report of 2 Whooping Cranes (*Grus americana*) from wet fields near the jct. of Rts 99 and 70, SUT, n. of Sacramento (DE). The observer, who was driving at the time and viewed the birds taking off, provided credible details for the sighting, but there have been no previous accepted records for this highly endangered species anywhere in the state.

Two Pacific Golden-Plovers accompanied Black-bellies at the Vic Fazio WA, YOL, on the 1st of the month (BWe), while 1 continued Apr. 5 at Moss Landing (DVP, MB), and another was with Black-bellies at a reservoir near Riley Rd, SAC, Apr. 10 (AEn). Four Black-necked Stilts continuing at the Ukiah Sewage Treatment Plant, MEN, Apr. 6-7, were unusual for the county (MMa). Twelve Lesser Yellowlegs were reported from 6 counties. Solitary Sandpipers were recorded Apr. 13 in SM (RSTh), Apr. 20 in COL (BW) and HUM (DF), Apr. 25 in GLE (BD, SG, BW, EP), and Apr. 27 in SHA (2 birds;

Wood Warbler Sightings

Tennessee Warbler

Apr. 13 L. Merced, SF JF, JY

Lucy's Warbler

Apr. 8 Montara, SM AJ

Northern Parula

Apr. 22 Mitchell Cyn, DW
Mt. Diablo SP, CC

Black-throated Blue Warbler

Apr. 5 Campbell, SCL, JTw
feeder

Northern Waterthrush

Apr. 2-11 near Shoreline Blvd, CHi; mob
SCL

Hooded Warbler

Apr. 10 Lighthouse, PRNS RS, PP

Abbreviations for Observers:

DA, Dustin Alcalá; KA, Kumaran Arul; TA, Tim Amaral; BB, Barry Barker; DB, Dennis Braddy; DBI, Dusty Bleher; EB, Ellen Blustein; FB, Florence Bennett; GB, Gary Bloomfield; MB, Matt Brady; PB, Patricia Braddy; DC, Dennis Cavallo; JC, Josiah Clark; RC, Rita Colwell; BD, Bruce Deuel; JD, Jim Danzenbaker; MD, Mike Dion; ND, Nancy DeStephanis; PD, Peter Dramer; AEn, Andy Englis; DE, David Erdreich; TE, Todd Easterla; DF, David Fix; JF, Jamie Fenneman; LF, Linda Fineman; LFr, Lee French; RF, Rob Fowler; DG, Dan Greaney; JG, John Gideon; SG, Steve Glover; SGe, Steve Gerow; AH, Alan Hopkins; CH, Cliff Hawley; CHi, Chrissy Hind; JH, John Hewston; SH, Steve Hampton; KI, Ken Irwin; AJ, Alvaro Jaramillo; CK, Chris Koundakjian; JK, Jon King; EL, Earl Lebow; JL, John Luther; JLe, Jack Levene; JLo, Jim Lomax; DM, Dan Murphy; DMc, Dawn McLaughlin; MM, Michael Mammoser; MMa, Matthew Matthiessen; SM, Susan Masta; SMa, Sylvia Macon; TM, Tim

Manolis; WM, Wayne Macon; CN, Chns Nicolai; PN, Paul Noble; RN, Russ Namitz; CO, Chet Ogan; FO, Frances Oliver; BP, Bill Principe; BPe, Barbara Peck; CP, Courtney Peddle; EP, Ed Pandolfino; KP, Kathleen Principe; KPe, Kenneth Petersen; MP, Mike Peters; MPe, Michael Perrone; PP, Peter Pyle; TP, Tim Peretti; DQ, Dave Quady; BR, Bob Reiling; DR, Don Roberson; JR, Jim Rowoth; JRa, John Ranlett; MR, Michael Rogers; RR, Richard Redmond; WR, Will Richardson; DS, David Suddjian; FS, Frank Sieversen; JS, John Sterling; JSp, Jenny Sparrow; KS, Kirk Swenson; MS, Mike Scram; PS, Paul Saraceni; RS, Rich Stallcup; RSc, Rusty Scalf; DT, Dorothy Tobkin; FT, Francis Toldi; JT, Jim Tietz; JTo, John Toldi; JTr, John Trochet; JTw, Jerry Towner; LT, Lars Tomanek; RSTh, Ron S. Thorn; V, Vishnu; DVP, David Vander Pluym; FV, Frank Vanslager; AW, Adam Winer; BW, Brian Williams; BWd, Bud Widdowson; BWe, Bruce Webb; DW, Dennis Wolf; JW, Jay Withgott; MW, Matt Wachs; RW, Roger Wolfe; SW, Stan Wolcowitz; BY, Bob Yutzy; CY, Carol Yutzy; JY, Jason Yakich.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others:

ALA, Alameda; CLV, Calaveras; CC, Contra Costa, Co.; County; COL, Colusa; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek; Cyn, Canyon; DN, Del Norte; FRE, Fresno; GGP, Golden Gate Park; GLE, Glenn; hr, hours; Hwy, Highway; HUM, Humboldt; KIN, Kings; L., Lake; LAS, Lassen; MEN, Mendocino; MER, Merced; min, minutes; MRN, Marin; MTY, Monterey; n./s./e./w. = north/south/east/west; NBSP, Natural Bridges SP; NEV, Nevada; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; PLA, Placer; Pt, Point; PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore; PT, pelagic trip; R., River; Rd, Road; Res, Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; SAC, Sacramento; SBT, San Benito; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SF, San Francisco; SHA, Shasta; SIE, Sierra; SJ, San Joaquin; SM, San Mateo; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; STA, Stanislaus; SUT, Sutter; TEH, Tehama; W.A., Wildlife Area; YOL, Yolo; YUB, Yuba.

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers; "oob" = other observers. All information is compiled from rare bird alert transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions.

Our belated thanks to Bruce Mast for compiling the January-February Observations!

JLo) and SAC (3 birds; JTr). Two Baird's Sandpipers were discovered Apr. 4 at the Vic Fazio WA, YOL (JLe, BWe), and reseen on the 6th (CH); 1 bird remained on the 15th (SH). Four Rock Sandpipers were at the North Jetty, HUM, Apr. 13 (RN), and 1 was reported by an out-of-state birder at Moss Landing jetty Apr. 15, but could not be refound (fide SW). The Reeve at State and Spreckles in Alviso was seen Apr. 12 and 23 (FV, BR). Three Red-necked Phalaropes twirled in a Davenport, SCZ, pond Apr. 23 (DS), and 1 was seen flying by Bolsa Pt, SM, Apr. 7 (RSTh).

A South Polar Skua flew by a seawatch at Pigeon Pt, SM, Apr. 20 (JL). Single Pomarine Jaegers were seen

there that day as well as Apr. 7 at Bolsa Pt, SM (RSTh), Apr. 18 at Pigeon Pt (JD), and Apr. 21 off Fairhaven, HUM (MW); a jaeger species was seen Apr. 26 off NBSP (KA). Six Franklin's Gulls were seen during the month—singles Apr. 1 at Honey L. WA, LAS (DB, PB), Apr. 13 and 17 at Bolsa Pt, SM (RSTh), and Apr. 27 at Pescadero Marsh, SM (RSTh), and 2 near Hwy 1, SCZ Apr. 22 (DS). Heerman's Gulls, most of which breed in Baja California, were observed paired up and on territory at Roberts L., Seaside, MTY, Apr. 16 (DR). On Apr. 23, a second-winter **Iceland Gull** (*Larus glaucooides*) was reported

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flying past Patrick's Pt SP, HUM (KI). The last Thayer's Gull report was Apr. 27 from Bolsa Pt, SM (RSTh). And single Glaucous Gulls were continuing Apr. 9 at the Yolo Co. Central Landfill (JK) and Apr. 12 at Alviso (BR, FV). Black-legged Kittiwakes, 39 in all, were seen in DN, HUM, SM, SF, and MEN.

Caspian Terns were in regionwide by the end of the first week of April; out-of-season Elegant Terns appeared at New Brighton SB, SCZ, Apr. 14 (3), and Soquel Cr. mouth, SCZ, Apr. 29 (DS). Common Terns were reported from San Lorenzo, ALA (2 birds; RSc) and Ed Levin CP, SCL (DBI) on Apr. 6, and on Apr. 25 at the San Lorenzo R. mouth, SCZ (3 birds; DS). Least Terns were found to have arrived at Albany Crescent, CC, Apr. 23 (DA) and at the San Lorenzo R. mouth, SCZ, 2 days later (DS). Black Terns appeared later, with several in YOL Apr. 28 (SH), 1 in KIN (JR) and 1 in YOL (MPe) Apr. 29, and 3 in SJ Apr. 30 (FB). High count for the Charleston Slough, SCL, Black Skimmers was 16 (JW), while several showed up at the Alviso Salt Ponds, SCL, off and on during the month, and 1 appeared at Coyote Pt CP, SM, Apr. 4 (RSTh). Two were at Moss Landing, MTY, Apr. 21 (JG), and 2 put in an appearance at Bodega Bay, SON, Apr. 2 (CN).

Ancient Murrelets were spotted from Bolsa and Pigeon Pts, SM, 17 and 20 Apr., (RSTh, JL), and from Fairhaven, HUM, Apr. 7 (MW). A murrelet of unknown species was found deep within San Francisco Bay at Charleston Slough, SCL, Apr. 18 (LFr). Tufted Puffins flew by Pt Pinos, Pacific Grove, MTY, Apr. 12 (DR), and Trinidad, HUM, Apr. 22 (RN).

Doves to Thrashers

The White-winged Dove seen sporadically in Feb. and Mar. near NBSP, SCZ, appeared again for a day on Apr. 4 (DMc, MD). Two Barred Owls were at Prairie Cr. SP, HUM, Apr. 23 (DF). The Long-eared Owl at Ed Levin CP, SCL, was observed Apr. 2 and 6 (FV, BR; DBI), and a pair called Apr. 28 from Long Ridge, SCZ, an area they inhabited last year (DS). Single Short-eared Owls occurred Apr. 18 at Younger Lagoon, SCZ (SGe), and Apr. 22 at Hayward Shoreline, ALA (PD). Saw-whet Owls were heard on two big day attempts, Apr. 23 at Butano SP, SM (AW, FT, JTo) and Apr. 30 on Rayhouse Rd, YOL (EP, JRa, CH). The first Lesser Nighthawk report was of at least 8 birds at Cache Cr., YOL, Apr. 30 (EP, JRa, CH), while a Common Nighthawk was seen in Eureka, HUM, Apr. 23 (CO). Common Poorwills arrived late in the month, with several reports between the 24th and 28th.

At least 144 Vaux's Swifts were noted throughout the month from 8 counties. The spring's first Black-chinned Hummingbird report came from an Anderson, SHA, feeder, Apr. 16 (BPe). Costa's Hummer was first seen Apr. 9 at Del Puerto Cyn, STA (FB); other individuals were reported from Soberanes Cyn, SCZ, Apr. 13 (RW); Summit Ridge, SCZ, the same day (DS); Belmont, SM, Apr. 15 (RSTh); and Mitchell Cyn, Mt. Diablo SP, Apr. 22-27 (DW; oob). San Francisco's first-ever confirmed Calliope Hummingbird was found Apr. 10 at Mt Davidson (PS; mob)—and amazingly, later in the month another Calliope was found in the city, at Bayview Hill Apr. 26 (JL). Additional Calliope records away from the mountains included individuals Apr. 5 and Apr. 7 in SCL (RC, JD) and Apr. 7 at Grasslands RP, YOL (KS, EB). In Fresno Co. Apr. 14, a female Broad-tailed Humming-

bird was located on a nest along the road to Hume L., for an apparent first county record (SM, JW).

A Lewis's Woodpecker at Ryan Ranch, MTY, continued through at least the 12th (mob). A drumming Red-breasted Sapsucker seen in the Soquel Demonstration Forest, SCZ, Apr. 16 and 24, raised suspicion it might try to nest there (DS). In Mono Co., at least two Black-backed Woodpeckers were working an extensive burned area along Rt 120 8 mi. e. of Rt 395, Apr. 20 (BP, KP, oob). Olive-sided Flycatchers were reported 8 times by the 18th, and regularly after that.

The first Western Wood-Pewee arrival was noted Apr. 10 at Sycamore Grove, SCZ—the county's earliest-ever record by 6 days (DS). More began streaming into the region in the following days. The first Hammond's Flycatcher reports came on the 6th, with sightings of single birds at NBSP, SCZ (SGe) and Del Valle RP, SCL (DA), and 2 birds at Smith's Cr., SCL (MR). The SCZ Hammond's was the county's earliest-ever by 8 days (DS). The very same day saw the region's first Dusky Flycatcher of the season, a bird at Coyote Pt CP, SM (RSTh). This Apr. 6 record may be the earliest-ever for northern California (RSTh); more Duskie trickled in starting on the 11th. One Gray Flycatcher was reported from chaparral near Hwy 88 in Alpine Co. Apr. 25 (TE). Curiously, Pacific-slope Flycatchers actually produced fewer reports in the first 2 weeks of April than in the last 2 weeks of March (15 vs. 21), despite reports from the region's most active birders. Ash-throated Flycatchers had established themselves by mid-April, with 12 reports coming in the first half of the month. The Tropical Kingbird of GGP, SF, remained at the Buffalo Paddock at least through the 17th (mob), and

the region's one Cassin's Kingbird sighting was at San Felipe Rd, SCL, Apr. 14 (MM).

Cassin's Vireos began passing through early, with 10 birds reported from 5 counties in the first week of April. One Gray Jay was seen Apr. 24 at Arcata Community Forest, HUM (J1). Meanwhile, Yellow-billed Magpies continued to make news in SF and SM Cos, where they are normally rare. One bird at Coyote Pt CP, SM, was joined by a second on Apr. 16 (RSTh). In San Francisco, 2, then 1, magpies were in the Hunter's Pt neighborhood Apr. 14 through month's end (AH, ND, mob). And a ranger on Angel Is., SF and MRN, said 2 magpies had been on the island from late Feb through mid-March (fide DM).

Purple Martins were reported after the 7th from 7 counties; if a Glenn Co. pair seen Apr. 25 breeds, it will likely be the first county breeding record in half a century (BD, SG, BW, EP). The first Bank Swallows arrived in April's opening week, with the initial sighting Apr. 4 at the Pajaro R., SCL (DS). A Townsend's Solitaire on Apr. 16 eating madrone flowers along Loma Prieta Rd explored both the SCL and SCZ sides of the ridge (DS). On Apr. 7 a very early Swainson's Thrush appeared in Meder Cyn, SCZ (SGe). About 7 more Swainson's were seen in various locations between the 10th and 15th, but no more were reported until the 27th, after which numerous individuals began passing through. A year or two after Wrentits were considered extirpated from San Francisco, a pair was discovered in an isolated and unbirded patch of native vegetation on Bayview Hill in the corner of the city, Apr. 25 through month's end (JC; oob). A Sage Thrasher was found Apr. 10 at Meiss Rd, SAC (AEn).

Wood Warblers to Finches

Few vagrant warblers were reported during the month, but regular western migrants passed through in decent numbers. Nashville Warblers were established by mid-month, with 19 reports through the first half of April. Three Yellow Warblers were in on Apr. 4 in SCZ and SCL (DS), and small numbers trickled in throughout the month after that. Black-throated Grays were in good numbers by the end of the first week of April, and nesting was observed on the 11th in SCZ (DS). Hermit Warbler reports were sprinkled throughout the month as they returned to their upland breeding grounds. The first MacGillivray's Warblers were Apr. 7 at Smith Cr., SCL (JD) and Watsonville, SCZ (DS), with 10 more reports from throughout the region by the 28th. The season's first Yellow-breasted Chats appeared Apr. 22 in yards in SCZ and SHA (KA, BY, CY), and over half a dozen more followed quickly in the week after that.

Western Tanagers arrived during the first half of the month, with 15 reports. Chipping Sparrows began arriving the first week of April, while a Brewer's Sparrow was noted Apr. 10 along Meiss Rd, SAC (AEn). Eleven Vesper Sparrows from 8 counties were reported throughout the month. On Apr. 28 a breeding-plumaged male Lark Bunting was observed on Panoche Rd, SBT (KPe, LF). On Apr. 7, an impressive total of at least 30-35 Lincoln's Sparrows was tallied migrating through the Carmel R. vicinity, MTY (RF, TA, LT). Throughout the month, 25 White-throated Sparrows were reported from ALA, SCL, SCZ, SF, HUM. Harris's Sparrows continued at Mapes Rd, Honey L., LAS, Apr. 2-3 (DQ); near the Loyalton sewage ponds, SIE, Apr. 8 (DC, BB); and in a Watsonville, SCZ, yard through the 30th (WM, SMa); new ones were found Apr. 25 on Diamond

Valley Rd, ALP (TE) and Apr. 30 at a Redding, SHIA, feeder (DG).

Black-headed Grosbeaks were in good numbers starting early in the month, with 25 reports from 12 counties by the 9th. The year's first Blue Grosbeak reports all came on Apr. 23—from Yolo Bypass WA, YOL (SH), Cosumnes R. Preserve, SAC (JTr), and Del Puerto Cyn, STA (DB). An early Lazuli Bunting was singing on Mt. Madonna Rd, SCZ, on Apr. 2 (DS). Later reports began on the 15th; by the 23rd 10 birds had been recorded.

One Yellow-headed Blackbird appeared coastally at the Moon Glow Dairy, MTY, Apr. 18 (EL). About 30 Great-tailed Grackles were reported from 12 widely scattered counties in April. Reports of this spreading species came from as far north as COL, and also from ALA, ALP, CC, CLV, FRE, MER, MTY, SAC, SCZ, SON, and YOL. The two Orchard Orioles at NBSP, SCZ, continued, the adult being last definitely seen on the 6th, and the immature male being seen through at least the 27th. In San Francisco, the city Zoo's Orchard Oriole was refound on Apr. 3 (DM). Hooded Orioles were established in many locations the first week of April, with 16 reports by the 9th. In Laguna Grande Park, Seaside, MTY, Apr. 13, an immature Baltimore Oriole was found (RF).

Pairs of Red Crossbills that may indicate breeding were seen in coastal locations in SM Apr. 13 (AJ), SF Apr. 16-21 (JW; oob), SCZ Apr. 20 (MB, DVP), and SM Apr. 23 and 30 (mob). Two Evening Grosbeaks flew over the Tall Forest, SAC, Apr. 10 (AEn). And finally, Lawrence's Goldfinches were seen in numerous locations north to at least CLV and COL. Nesting was suspected in several instances, and the incursion showed no sign of abating as we moved into May. 🐦



Anne McTavish

Volunteers at the Earth Day wetland restoration and clean-up event between Piers 92 and 94 in San Francisco. See the story on page one.

We've Moved

Yes we have moved—but just across the hall. We are still at 2530 San Pablo Avenue and it is still Suite G, but we are across the hall in a room that is twice our previous size. Most people who have been to the new office can't believe we used to fit all of us and our supplies into the old room. We were living on top of each other and now we can breathe again. It's great!

Our new space is also large enough to allow us to hold birding classes (look for announcements of these in future Gulls) and to have a greater variety of birding paraphernalia for sale. We now offer books, feeders and seed, but in the future we'll have tapes, CD, software and more.

We are also looking for more volunteers to help out in the office now that we have room. So give us a call or come on down and visit. We look forward to seeing you. You can still call us at 510.843.2222.

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